Mondovi: Our Savior's, Gilmanton & Montana: Salem United Methodist Churches
11.15.2026, 25th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. Hyuntae Kim, Ph.D.

"Enter Into the Joy of Your Master"

Matt 25:14-30

Let us pray: God, give us ears to hear what you are saying to us through the Scriptures today. Give us also the hearts and strength to obey your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

There's an old Western saying that goes like this: If you want to be happy for a day, get a haircut. If you want to be happy for a week, buy a car. If you want to be happy for a month, get married. And if you want to be happy for a year, buy a new house. It seems that there are different kinds of happiness that last for different lengths of time. Then what do we need to do if we want to be happy forever? As we heard in today's Scripture, we need to enter into the joy of our master.

Living a life that participates in God's joy is connected to staying awake and waiting for the Lord at the end of the age. Last week, in the parable of the ten virgins, we learned that being awake meant being prepared with oil. In today's parable of the talents, being awake means faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to us so that we may enter into God's joy.

The parable begins, "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property" (Matthew 25:14, ESV). The master did not give his property to the servants as their own. Rather, he entrusted it to them. Since this is a parable that uses earthly things as a shadow of heavenly realities, there must be a spiritual reality behind it. Who is the master? It is Jesus. His going to a faraway country points to his going to the Father after his death on the cross. Who are the servants? They are the disciples, and that includes us. Then what does the property represent? In the context of this parable, I believe it represents the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the one who brought the kingdom of God into this world. He entrusted this kingdom to those who belong to him, his people, before he departed. The kingdom begins and grows through the proclamation of the gospel. Jesus entrusted it to his people so that they would expand his kingdom and bring all the nations of the earth into the blessing of God. We can also understand that, for this work, he entrusted his disciples with gifts, abilities, and other resources that belong to Christ.

One talent was worth about twenty years' wages for a laborer in those days. In today's terms, that would be equivalent to about $400,000 to $600,000. Five talents would be worth more than $2 million, and two talents would be worth more than $800,000. But the value of the kingdom of God is actually beyond anything we can imagine.

The servant who received five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. One notable characteristic of this servant is that he went at once. This is the attitude of a faithful servant. Even though the master was far away and out of sight, he did not sit around doing nothing. He got to work immediately. The servant who received two talents did exactly the same. He went at once and traded with them, making another two talents in profit.

The Lord knows the characteristics of his servants, so he entrusts each one with an appropriate amount of talents. In the history of Christian missions, there was a man who received five talents and gained five more. His name was William Carey. He is known as the father of modern missions.

Carey was the son of a shoemaker and had little formal education. After he became a world-renowned missionary, he once attended a banquet hosted by the Governor-General of India. An officer sitting across from him asked, "Mr. Carey, weren't you once a shoemaker?" Carey replied, "No, sir. I was only a cobbler, even lower than a shoemaker."

The Lord entrusts five talents to a humble person like this. Carey was grateful to God for using someone as inadequate as himself. He was also deeply thankful that God had saved him from his sins. Out of his love for the Lord, he devoted himself to world missions.

This is one of the characteristics of love: it goes at once. When we love someone, we do not delay. We want to do something for that person right away. Because we love the Lord, whether we have received five talents or two, we put them to work and bear fruit.

The servant who received one talent is not described as going at once. Instead, he went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. How much money was even one talent worth! But when he compared himself with those who had received five talents and two talents, he no longer felt motivated. He probably experienced a sense of relative poverty and buried his talent.

"Now after a long time," the master came back. Just as the bridegroom was delayed in the parable of the ten virgins, the master also took a long time to return. The important question is how we should live each day, when it feels as though the Lord is taking a long time to come, so that we will be ready for his return.

At last, the master returned and settled accounts with his servants. He came to see whether they had carried out their responsibilities faithfully, according to his instructions. Ecclesiastes 3:15 says, "God seeks what has been driven away." God will surely call us to account for everything he has entrusted to us. Whether it is our time, our material possessions, other people, or any responsibility, he will surely settle accounts with us.

Who was the first to come forward when the time came to settle accounts? It was the servant who had gained five more talents. The second was the one who had gained two more talents. The one who had received the most, worked the most, and gained the most came first. This shows how much he longed for his master's return. His longing was expressed through his faithfulness. So when the master returned, he was so joyful that he came forward without delay.

Verse 20 says: "He who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.'"

One thing the reports of the servants who received five and two talents have in common is that they speak of the master's grace before talking about their own accomplishments. The servant does not say, "I worked so hard, traveling here and there to do business, and this is how much profit I made." Instead, he

acknowledges that the master considered him faithful and entrusted him with as many as five talents, and that he was able to make more by building on what the master had entrusted to him.

Here we can see who is able to be faithful. Only those who have truly recognized and experienced grace can be faithful.

In 1 Corinthians 15:9–10, Paul confesses: "For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." Paul never forgot what kind of person he had been before.

David was the same way. Even after he became king, he never forgot that he had once been a shepherd tending sheep.

Those who know grace are people who see their own sins. In the parable of the ten virgins, the oil represents the Holy Spirit. One of the central works of the Holy Spirit is to convict people of their sins and lead them to repentance. This is necessary because it brings people back to Jesus. Matthew 1:21 tells us that Jesus came to save his people from their sins. The resolution of the problem of sin is at the heart of salvation.

The more we become aware of our own sins, the more we repent. The more we repent, the more deeply we recognize God's grace, and the more we love the Lord. God uses people like this. When a woman poured perfume on Jesus' feet, Jesus said in Luke 7:47 that the one who has been forgiven much loves much, but the one who has been forgiven little loves little.

William Carey was not sent out as a missionary by the British missionary society because he lacked the required educational qualifications. Yet he became the father of modern missions, accomplishing what graduates of Oxford and Cambridge had not. He established a major college in Serampore, India, translated the Bible into more than sixteen languages, and sowed the seeds of moral and social reform to abolish harmful practices in India, including widow burning and infanticide.

I believe that Carey's five talents were neither money nor academic qualifications. Rather, they were his gratitude for the Lord's grace and his daily awareness of his own sins. That is the kind of person who gains five more talents. And the Lord promises to give such a person this kind of reward.

Verse 21. His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."

The master gave exactly the same reward to the servant who had gained two more talents. Were $800,000 or $2 million small amounts? Compared with the eternal work of heaven, however, everything we do on this earth is like a shadow. It is nothing in comparison.

The master did not send his servants out to trade because he needed money. He was testing them to find faithful servants who could be entrusted with governing the kingdom of God. The master did not evaluate them by their results, the amount of profit they made, or how clever they were. What mattered was

whether they had been faithful throughout the process. The Lord looks not so much at what position or title we hold, but at whether we are faithful in the place where he has put us.

How can we know whether we are being faithful? One way is to ask ourselves whether we serve with joy and peace, looking forward to entering into the joy of our master.

The servant who had received one talent came last. He was already resentful because he had received less than the others. Then, after watching the other two servants receive their master's praise, he became even more envious. So he tried to justify himself. "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours."

The word "hard" means harsh, stubborn, and cold-hearted. He viewed his master as someone who exploited his servants to make unearned profits. He misunderstood the character of his master.

Notice that the master did not take any money away from the first two servants. Instead, he entrusted them with even more. This servant failed to recognize the grace of having been entrusted with even one talent. Rather than taking responsibility, he blamed his master.

The master judged this servant as "wicked and slothful." Then he repeated the servant's own words: "You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest." A person will be judged by his own words.

The master ordered that the one talent be taken away from this servant and given to the one who had ten talents. This unprofitable servant was thrown into the outer darkness, where he would suffer the shame of weeping and gnashing his teeth. This is a principle of reward in the kingdom of God: to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Brothers and sisters, being unprofitable is itself a sin. Some people say, "I have not harmed the church. I have simply stayed out of the way." But in Luke 11:23, Jesus says, "Whoever does not gather with me scatters." In fact, the story of the servant who buried his one talent takes up quite a lengthy portion of this parable. This shows that the Lord is seeking to awaken and nurture those who have buried their one talent, calling them back to the place of salvation.

May it be our vision in life to grow in our understanding of the Lord's grace. May we love him and serve faithfully in the mission of the kingdom of God with gratitude, and enter into the joy of our master. I bless you in the name of the Lord. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord, thank you for entrusting us with your kingdom and providing us with gifts and abilities for this work. Help us to recognize your grace more deeply, long for your return, and multiply the talents you have entrusted to us. So that when you come to settle accounts with us, we may hear you say, "Well done," and enter into your eternal joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, our master. Amen.